

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L VIENNA 0677

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SUBJECT: KREISKY ON SITUATION OF SOCIALISTS IN SOUTHERN TIER

REF: VIENNA 0641

1. I SAW CHANCELLOR KREISKY ON JANUARY 27 AND AFTER TAKING NOTE OF HIS PRESS STATEMENT ON JANUARY 26 THAT AUSTRIAN SOCIALISTS WOULD CONTINUE TO OBSERVE BAN ON CONTACTS WITH COMMUNISTS PARTIES (REFTEL), I ASKED HIM FOR HIS LATEST THINKING ON SITUATION OF SOCIALIST PARTIES IN SOUTHERN TIER IN WAKE OF RECENT MEETING OF WESTERN EUROPEAN SOCIALISTS IN DENMARK.

2. KREISKY OBSERVED THAT LEADERS OF SOCIALIST PARTIES OF SOUTHERN TIER ARGUED AT HELSINGOER THAT POLITICAL SITUATIONS IN THEIR RESPECTIVE COUNTRIES STRONGLY SUGGESTED "NECESSITY OF SOME FORM OF COOPERATION" WITH COMMUNISTS. ON COUNTRY-BY-COUNTRY BASIS, KREISKY THEN MADE FOLLOWING BRIEF COMMENTS.

3. FRANCE: MITTERAND DEFENDED HIS APPROACH AS HAVING PUT SOCIALISTS IN ASCENDANCY VIS-A-VIS COMMUNISTS AND THAT ONLY WAY FOR FRENCH SOCIALISTS TO REAFFIRM THEIR GROWING IMPORTANCE IS TO BE "ANCHORED IN WORKING CLASS TOGETHER WITH COMMUNISTS." ANY OTHER APPROACH, ACCORDING TO MITTERAND, WOULD LEAD TO DEEP SPLIT AMONG SOCIALISTS.

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4. ITALY: KREISKY DESCRIBED DEMARTINO SOCIALIST PARTY

AS BEING "IN A MESS" AND FEARFUL OF BEING GROUND UP BETWEEN COMMUNIST RULE IN PROVINCES AND CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATIC RULE AT FEDERAL LEVEL IN ROME. AIM OF SOCIALISTS IS THEREFORE TO HAVE COMMUNISTS ACCEPT IN SOME CLEARER FORM SHARE OF RESPONSIBILITY FOR DEALING WITH ITALY'S DIFFICULT INTERNAL SITUATION. DEMARTINO IDEA, ACCORDING TO KREISKY, IS TO CREATE SOME SORT OF COALITION COMMITTEE, WITH COMMUNIST PARTY MEMBERSHIP, OUTSIDE OF FEDERAL GOVERNMENT COALITION. KREISKY OBSERVED THAT IDEA HAS NO SUPPORTERS - SPECIFICALLY NEITHER DC NOR CPI NOR US NOR SOVIET UNION - OTHER THAN ITALIAN SOCIALIST PARTY.

5. SPAIN: KREISKY STATED HE PERSONALLY KNEW SPANISH CP LEADER CARILLO FROM SPANISH CIVIL WAR DAYS AS TOUGH AND INDEPENDENT-MINDED PERSON WHO, HE THOUGHT, WOULD NOT SUBMIT TO MOSCOW DISCIPLINE. CARILLO REPORTEDLY HAS GOOD CONTACTS WITH YUGOSLAV AND ITALIAN COMMUNIST PARTIES.

6. PORTUGAL: KREISKY DESCRIBED SOARES AS BEING MAJOR OPPONENT OF PORTUGUESE COMMUNIST PARTY AND DETERMINED TO MAKE IT INSIGNIFICANT POLITICAL FACTOR ON PORTUGUESE SCENE, AN UNDERTAKING THE SUCCESS OF WHICH WAS DOUBTFUL, ACCORDING TO KREISKY. CHANCELLOR SAID FONSECA ANTUNES IS ALSO STRONG OPPONENT OF COMMUNISTS. DURING HIS RECENT VISIT TO VIENNA, ANTUNES TOLD KREISKY IN RESPONSE TO LATTER'S QUERY, THAT PORTUGUESE SOCIALISTS ARE LOYAL TO NATO AND THAT COMMUNISTS ARE EXCLUDED FROM PARTICIPATION IN GOVERNMENT DISCUSSIONS OF NATO AND OTHER MILITARY MATTERS.

7. COMMENT: CHANCELLOR'S APPROACH TO ISSUE OF POSSIBLE SOCIALIST-COMMUNIST COOPERATION FOR AUSTRIA REFLECTS AUSTRIA'S FIRST-HAND EXPERIENCE OF DEALING WITH ITS OWN MOSCOW CONTROLLED COMMUNISTS IN EARLIER POST-WAR PERIOD AND PROXIMITY OF THREE COMMUNIST REGIMES ON ITS OWN BORDERS. ACCORDINGLY, KREISKY STRONGLY OPPOSES PARTY CONTACTS BETWEEN AUSTRIAN SOCIALISTS AND COMMUNISTS, EITHER AUSTRIAN CP OR CP'S ABROAD. AT
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SAME TIME, HE FEELS THAT CHANGING POLITICAL CONSTELLATIONS ARE EVOLVING IN SOUTHERN TIER OF EUROPEAN STATES AND IN ABSENCE OF CONVINCING EVIDENCE TO CONTRARY, SOCIALIST LEADERS THERE WOULD SEEM TO BE BEST JUDGE OF WHAT THEIR INTERESTS ARE. HOWEVER, CHANCELLOR REMAINS PERSONALLY SKEPTICAL OF PROSPECTS OF ANY SOCIALIST-COMMUNIST COOPERATION SERVING INTERESTS OF DEMOCRATIC, PLURALISTIC WESTERN SOCIETY. BUCHANAN

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